

MAINTENANCE PLANNING NEWSLETTER

August 2004

Vol. 2004-2

Interstate Exit Sign Update

The next time you travel on I-15, I-80, I-84 or I-70, take a minute and see if you can spot one of the new mileposts recently installed. If you compare the milepost number to the next exit sign you may be surprised to see that the milepost and the exit sign number do not agree. Why? Over the years route alignments changed as segments were not built exactly where they were originally conceived or route alignment changed, adding or subtracting from the length of the road.

Several roads had confusing mileposts, such as US-50 and US-6 just east of Delta where US-50 branches from US-6 heading towards Holden. If an emergency call came for "milepost 1 on highway 6" it took some unscrambling whether to send an ambulance to the Nevada state line (90 miles distant) or to just east of Delta, a distance of only 2 miles from the hospital.

The new mileposts display the accumulated mileage from the beginning of the route, at the south or west end of the road. Determining new milepost locations and what is the primary direction of the route is the job of Marva Braun and Peter Bigelow of the Planning and Program Development Division. Marva and Peter have been busy all summer staking new routes with revised milepost locations.

UDOT installs mileposts on all state-maintained highways to aid travelers. A benefit to us is we can use mileposts for referencing feature location, where work is done or should be done, and to provide a linear reference system along the highway. Accident records are also tied to mileposts. Changing mileposts means exit sign numbers all over Utah must be changed to match.

How extensive are the changes? All mileposts on I-70 from Richfield to the Colorado state line were changed. No milepost numbers were changed on I-84 or I-215. There were several mileposts on I-80, east of Salt Lake City, that were relocated. Every milepost on I-15 north of Nephi, in Region 3, to the Idaho state line was changed. Although milepost numbers changed, some things stay the same. It's still 110 miles from Green River to Salina on I-70 across the San Rafael Swell without a single service station or store.

Region Traffic Engineers reviewed the proposed new exit numbers. Jeff Garney of Central Maintenance surveyed existing signs for letter size, alphabet series, and colors. Measuring the height and width of letters on a sign mounted 16 feet above the ground posed a difficult problem until Jeff modified a surveyor's rod with a horizontal scale similar to a stadia rod.

On I-70 the old exit numbers will be covered with new Retro-reflective sign overlays by state maintenance forces. The plan is to change all exit numbers at the same time so the public will be less confused about the changes. Public safety agencies will be notified of the proposed date so that dispatching emergency service vehicles will be uninterrupted. Mapmakers, publishers, and business owners will also be notified.

On I-80 and I-15, changes outside the Salt Lake valley will be completed by UDOT crews, while all overhead signs and exit signs needing changes in the Salt Lake area will be done by a contractor working at night to minimize the impact of lane closures on traffic. Changes on I-15 and I-80 will be coordinated with the Department of Public Safety, Utah Travel Council, and industry groups to minimize impact on public services.

On non-interstate routes, exit signs on US-89 near Lagoon and at Uintah will be changed to reflect the new milepost numbers. No revisions were required on SR-201 or US-6 in Price where freeway-standards signage is used on a non-interstate highway.